Reviewer's report

Title: A prospective study of monitoring practices for metabolic disease in antipsychotic-treated community psychiatric patients

Version: 1 Date: 2 May 2007

Reviewer: Nancy Covell

Reviewer's report:

General

This paper addresses a critical area for individuals with serious mental illness and contributes to the evidence calling for integrated physical and mental health care for this cohort.

Major Compulsory Revisions (that the author must respond to before a decision on publication can be reached)

None.

Minor Essential Revisions (such as missing labels on figures, or the wrong use of a term, which the author can be trusted to correct)

Under the results, “medication” (page 8), a reader may have difficulty following the information. For example, 56 were prescribed an atypical agent and the number of atypicals in parentheses adds up to 65. I recognize that it is probably the case that individuals are represented in more than one category; it would be helpful if there were some orienting statements to guide the reader through the section. Ideally, the authors might consider presenting the data so that each individual is represented only once (for example, N were prescribed a single atypical agent, N a single typical agent, N prescribed 2 or more antipsychotic medications, etc.). In addition to clarity, this latter approach also offers information about the incidence of antipsychotic polypharmacy.

Discretionary Revisions (which the author can choose to ignore)

1. Under the methods (page 6), if it is possible to briefly summarize the exclusion criteria from the original study, that would save a naïve reader from seeking out the original study to understand the population in the current paper.
2. In the discussion section, the authors introduce the fact that prescribers in the original study were made aware of the metabolic findings with particular attention to findings in the abnormal range. The authors may consider introducing this in the methods section so that the reader has this knowledge as they are reading through the findings (this fact makes the findings even more striking).
3. In Table 1, the authors may consider eliminating from the follow-up column those items that should remain constant (e.g., gender, ethnicity, diagnosis) or are expected to change with the passage of time (e.g., age and duration of illness). Because they were included in both columns I briefly wondered whether the 90 participants at baseline and follow-up differed somehow; perhaps another reader would see it the same way.

What next?: Accept after discretionary revisions

Level of interest: An article of importance in its field

Quality of written English: Acceptable

Statistical review: No, the manuscript does not need to be seen by a statistician.

Declaration of competing interests:

I declare that I have no competing interests